

Arachniphobia

by Esme

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Summary: In the middle of the night Rachel is stalked by a vulgar black creature...

Arachniphobia

> <meta name="GENERATOR"> arachniphobia

Title: aRACHniphobia

> Author: Esme
 Date: December 1999

> Category: Fluff!

> Disclaimer: well under MY christmas tree there are two really really big presents and don't tell anyone ... but I think they might be Frank and Rachel! I think Hal was real nice and he gave them to me! Or maybe he still owns them and I'm just a poor little girl who'll never own anything important.

> Author's Notes: I should say thanks once again to Jaye, for her help and ideas and stuff. And for her noticing the fact that Rach is in the middle of arachniphobia - freaky huh?. Funky please note that I have done all that you said we should do at the top of fics.

> Dedication: well I thought I might dedicate this to Sim, coz she rocks! Even if she did just write a fic which included a scene completely opposite to mine. And this is for Julia as well, I finished it quickly coz you wanted some fluff - enjoy!

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> - -
 aRACHniphobia

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 She lay as still as she could, her body a rigid form beneath the sheets. In the darkness she stared upwards, wide-eyed. Even in the pitch-black of the night she could see it. It was there. It was slowly crawling along the contours of her slim shape. The vulgar black creature a stark contrast to the white satin sheets. The picture in her mind was so vivid that it sent shivers down her spine. The tension was too much

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 She uttered a stifled scream, flicked on the light and

frantically brushed at the sheets. Of course there was nothing there, it was all just an illusion, a figment of her imagination. But she couldn't sleep like this.

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 She picked up the phone next to her bed and pressed the auto-dial button. She grinned as she remembered the look on his face when he'd found out he was number two in her auto-dial. What a privilege! Of course David was number one.

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> Frank stirred as he heard a distant ringing sound. Hopefully it would go away. No? What was it? Crap, it was the phone. He druggily reached for the phone and finally managed to answer it.
 "Mmmmm?"

> "Frank? It's Rachel."
 "Shit! What's wrong? What's happened?" he was suddenly alert at the sound of her voice.

> "Oh nothing. Nothing really."
 "Rach, do you know what time it is?"

> "Yeah, it's 2:43 am."
 "And you're calling me at 2:43 am for 'nothing really'?"

> "Well I've got a bit of a problem"
 "Can't it wait til tomorrow?"

> "No it can't. I can't sleep."
 "What, and you want me to come over so you can try the age-old cure for insomnia?" Even at 2:43 am Frank couldn't resist.

> "You're a comedian Francis, but no thanks."
 "Take drugs then."

> "No Frank, I can't sleep"
 "Yeah neither can I when people ring me up."

> "Look, I'm sorry. Are you gonna help me or not?"
 "Fine. What's the problem?"

> "I need you to come over here."
 "Come over there?"

> "Yeah. I need some help, coz I sorta lost something."
 "And you want me to come and find it?"

> "Yeah."
 "What is it?"

> "Just something."
 "Can't it wait?"

> "No! Frank just get your butt over here will you?"
 "Your every wish is my command."

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> Rachel sat waiting for Frank to arrive, her eyes continually scanning the room. Her skin began to tingle all over as her imagination went into overdrive. She was sure she could see it. She could feel it, sense it. It was creeping up behind her. Slowly. Step by step coming nearer and nearer and closer and closer and

> Rachel jumped a mile high when there was a knock at the door. She took a deep breath - she was cool, calm and composed. She opened the door and let Frank in.

> "Geez Holloway you didn't have to dress up or anything, I mean pyjamas would have been fine."
 "Trust me, if I'd worn my pyjamas over here, I would've been arrested for indecent exposure." He didn't look too happy about being up at 3 am.

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 "So what are we looking for? A ring or something?"

> "Not exactly."
 "So, we're looking for?"

> "*You're* looking for."
 "Fine, *I'm* looking for?"

> "Ummmm a spider."
 "A spider?"

> "Yeah."
 "You called me over here at 3 am to find a spider?"

> "Yeah."
 "Why?"

> "Well I was getting ready for bed and there was this huge black spider on the ceiling above my bed. So I went to get bug spray and stuff but it was gone when I came back."
 "So what's the problem

then?"

> "It could be anywhere Frank!"
 "Yeah, so?"
> "It might be in my bed or something."
 "Rachel," said Frank, pausing as he let this conversation sink in, "you're not afraid of spiders are you?"
> "Well not really afraid"
 "You are aren't you?"
> "No, like I said"
 "You're scared!"
> "Frank"
 "This is classic! Rachel Goldstein - fearless and feisty detective, but she's scared of spiders!"
>
 Frank was very amused by this piece of information. Rachel would have hit him, but she needed him to help her.
>
 "Just find it, Holloway," she muttered.
> "Wait til I tell Tommy and the others! What a laugh"
 "If you tell a single soul Frank, I will kick your arse to the other side of Sydney. If you breathe a word of this"
> She left the threat open for interpretation. She may need his help, but she was not going to let this become office gossip.

> "So," said Frank, promptly changing the topic, "what did this spider look like?"
 "Well it was huge," said Rachel.
> "What, like the size of a ten cent piece?"
 "Sarcasm doesn't suit you Frank. And it was bigger than a ten cent piece, it was about as big as a CD."
> "Really?"
 "Really."
> "Can you give us a more detailed description? Fair, medium, dark? Eye colour, hair colour? Height, build?"
 "Shut up Frank. It was about as big as a CD, it was black and hairy. And I think it spoke with a bit of an American accent."
> "Nice to see you still have your sense of humour at this hour of the morning."
 "Look Frank, just find the bloody spider will ya? Here's some insect spray, and here's David's bug catcher. The spider was last seen in my bedroom."
> "I'm allowed in your bedroom?" Frank looked at her as though he was a small child who had just been let loose in a lolly shop.
 Rachel gave him one of her looks and went to make coffee.
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> A few minutes later Frank came back with his arm behind his back.

 "I found it!" he said triumphantly, then he waved the bug catcher in front of Rachel's face.
> "Ugh!" she screamed and jumped back.
 Frank tried to suppress a laugh, but it escaped anyway.
> She gave him another one of her filthy looks and then looked at the spider in the bug catcher.
 "It looks like it's been flattened under a shoe."
> "It has."
 "Frank, that's about the size of a five cent piece, and that's after it's been squished and spread out."
> "Oh come on, it's gotta be at least twenty cents."
 "Ten - if you're lucky. Do you remember me saying it was the size of a CD??"

> "Yeah, but you're a woman - you exaggerate." Frank winced as he realised he had just stepped over the line.
 Rachel did the deadly combination of smiling and shaking her head.
> "Frank, as my friend used to say - everyone's a comedian until someone gets hurt."

> Frank pondered these words of wisdom as he hastily left to do a another thorough search of Rachel's bedroom, so that she would have time to cool down.

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 Half an hour later Rachel was on her fourth cup of coffee and Frank finally returned.

> "Rach, I can't find it anywhere. It's probably gone home to bed, just like I should have."
 "But what if it's still there? It could crawl into my bed in the middle of the night. And you found that little one too, there could be hundreds up there. There's probably a whole nest. I can't sleep up there!"

> "Geez Rachel, calm down! You're not gonna be able to sleep anywhere, you just drank a whole pot of coffee."
 "But Frank, this whole house is probably infested with spiders. I'll have to get the house fumigated, I'll have to move!"

> "Rachel, take a breath. It was just one spider." Frank was worried, he had never seen her like this before. He'd thought she was afraid of nothing, but obviously they still had a lot to learn about each other.

> "Yeah, it may have been just one spider, but I just *hate* spiders."
 "Really?"

> "Yes, and if you tell anyone I will never forgive you." Rachel was deadly serious, and Frank realised that she was trusting him with one of her biggest secrets. "I just can't sleep up there tonight Frank."
 "Well stay at my place then."

> "What?"
 "If you can't sleep here, then come and sleep at my place. Not that there's much of the night left."

> "You don't mind?"
 "Nah, what are friends for?"

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> By the time they got to Frank's house it was almost 5 am.
 "Just go up the stairs," said Frank, "you can have my room."

> "Don't be stupid, I'll sleep on the couch."
 "Nah, it's really uncomfortable. You can sleep in the bed."

> "No Frank, I'll be just fine here."
 "No! You're sleeping in my room! Just wait a second while I check to see if it's safe." He ran off before Rachel could protest. She couldn't understand how he could live in such a mess.

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 She sat down on the couch and kicked off her shoes.

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> A few minutes later Frank came back down the stairs, "It's ready Rach."
 But there was no response from the couch. Despite the masses of caffeine she had just consumed, Rachel had curled up and fallen asleep.

>
 Frank grinned and shook his head. He got some blankets and tenderly covered her. She looked so peaceful, so innocent. It was hard to believe she spent her life chasing dangerous crims. As she slept a frown formed on her face, and Frank had to resist the urge to reach down and smooth the lines on her forehead.

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 He left her to sleep and dragged himself up to bed, realising that he had to be up and getting ready for work in a few hours.

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> The rain pattered on the roof as Rachel stretched and yawned. Where was she? Oh yeah, Frank's place. She sleepily looked at her watch 11:37 shit! Oh crap, she was late. Like, really late.

> She jumped up and ran to the kitchen. No matter how late she was, she had to have coffee. There was a note taped to the coffee pot. Rachel smiled as she realised how well Frank knew her

> "Rach
 Have a cup of coffee and relax. I told Jeff that you called me and you're sick so you're having the day off. Make yourself at home, I'll be back around 12 to see if you're up."

> Frank."

> A day off? Well she certainly wasn't going to complain. She had been at Frank's house many times, so she could easily make herself at

home. She opened the cupboard where the mugs were kept. Or at least that's where she thought they were kept. There was not a mug in sight. Confused, she looked in the other cupboards, but without success. Then she noticed the sink.

> She should have known. This was Frank after all. The sink was full of mugs and plates and spoons and forks. Frank obviously hadn't heard of washing up. Although she was desperate for coffee she couldn't stand the thought of these dirty dishes. She cleared them out of the sink and filled it up with hot water. She managed to find some dishwashing liquid, but there didn't seem to be any gloves or brushes in sight. She'd just have to make do.

> She finished washing the dishes and then tackled the task of finding the coffee. She found many half used jars of instant, but being the coffee connoisseur she was, she wouldn't go anywhere near them. She finally found some real coffee tucked away in a corner.

> Just as she had made the coffee, Frank came in.
 "Feeling better?" he asked.

> "Yeah," she grinned. "Coffee?"
 "Oh yeah. With lots of milk and sugar!"

> "Ugh! I can't understand why people want to add all that stuff to coffee."
 As she walked over to the fridge for the milk she noticed a huge grin on Frank's face. She couldn't quite work out what it was for, but he definitely looked suspicious.

> "So what's been happening at the office eeeek!!!"
 Rachel stopped mid-sentence and screamed. Right in the middle of the fridge was David's bug-catcher with a CD-sized spider in it.

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 "Frank," she said calmly, without turning around. "You are really gonna wish you'd never done that"

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